

Advice To A Young Poet

by John Olson

Bend the jaws of January chip its granite walls get loaded on ambiguity. Sand a plank of wood. Hunger for presence. Jingle syllables, but answer nothing with a definition.

Touch these words with your mind. They will create an elephant with an unidentifiable itch.

Power is a seductive force. Give in to it. Power is good. Provided you do not use it to hurt people.

Shop around until you find the right scarf. Scarves are important. They give you a look of panache, and refinement.

Throw yourself into pleasure whenever pleasure offers itself to you. Probe the meanings of the human face. Fables of war and beauty.

And the faces of cats and lions.

Eyes, in particular.

Watch how the hawks hover and dive.

Steal money. Button your coat if it's cold outside.

Plunge into yourself. Tease your intentions. Plan on one thing and then surprise yourself by doing something altogether different.

Beat the wind with your fists. Jiggle the toilet handle if it doesn't flush right. Use strange foreign accents to stab the air with the sound of the stratosphere. Crawl across a ball room floor creating puddles of indecorous meaning. Behave as an animal deep in the wilderness.

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Change is essential. Burst into music if you have to. Fold yourself into an airplane.

Smell things touch things describe things.

Everything.

Attack the monolithic insults of capitalism.

Stir oddities of food. Bloom into yourself like a pretty thought. Scream at the morning. Aim at the truth with a big fat lie. Hop on a fresh perspective and sail away. If you meet a metaphor press its meat. Mutate into a creature with fins. Treasure any perspective that changes your mind.

Cut the air into ribbons of light. Battle webs of sticky vanity. Walk across a prairie pulsing like a distant star.

Lounge in eiderdown. Cry like an electric guitar. Sink into the glow of the morning. Lie in bed and dream. Banish worry with a cockatoo and a long red stick. Pump images from the unconscious. Sizzle with intensity. Spit fire. Roll around in propositions. Appear to be well-adjusted. Murmur the meaning of gold.

Explode into space.

Fight the asphyxiation of conformity.

Write a story about pirates.

Listen to the stethoscope of the imagination pressed against the ribs of the night.

